

21. NOTES ON LITTLE KNOWN LIZARDS FROM JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE

The lizards under report were collected from various parts of J & K state during the years 1974—1978. Of the six reported species, 1 (*Ablepharus pannonicus*) is new to India whereas 3 (*Sitana ponticeriana*, *Ophisops jerdoni* and *Acanthodactylus cantoris cantoris*) have been recorded for the first time in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

***Ablepharus pannonicus* Fitzinger**
Mediterranean Dwarf Skink

Ablepharus pannonicus Fitzinger (1823) in Lichtenstein, in Eversmann's Reise nach Buchara, p. 145.

Material examined: (1) Near Bahu Fort, Jammu, Oct., 1978.

The genus *Ablepharus* is recorded in India for the first time. A single specimen of *A. pannonicus*, with snout vent length 30 mm, was obtained from the dry alluvial bed of river Tawi in Jammu.

Minton (1966) obtained the specimens of this species from mountainous northern sections of province from Quetta to Chitral in Pakistan. His specimens were collected at an elevation of 2133 m (7000 ft) while discussing world distribution of the species, Leviton and Anderson (1970) reported its occurrence in Iraq, northern and western Iran, U.S.S.R., Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Afghanistan, the specimens were obtained at an elevation of 2316 m (7600 ft). The single specimen examined, however, was collected at an altitude of 260 m in Jammu province of J&K state.

***Sitana ponticeriana* Cuvier**
Fan-throated Lizard

Sitana ponticeriana Cuvier (1829) Re'gne

Anim. 2nd, ed. ii, p. 43.

Material examined: (5), 3 males and 2 females, Bahu Fort, Jammu. April—August, 1978.

The *Sitana* lizards were collected in a dry alluvial bed of river Tawi, near Bahu Fort in Jammu. It appears to be uncommon in this part of country. It is fast runner, and takes refuge in bushes or under stones when chased. A female, with snout vent length 45 mm, collected in June had 8 oviducal eggs with an average size 8.5 mm x 4 mm.

***Ophisops jerdoni* Blyth**
Punjab Snake-eyed Lizard

Ophisops jerdonii Blyth (1853). Asiat. Soc. Beng. xxii, p. 653. *Material examined*: (10) 3 males, 5 females and 2 juveniles, Jhajjar kotli, Nagrota and Bahu-Fort in Jammu; April—Nov., 1977.

Punjab Snake-eyed Lizard is a species of xeric conditions found in dry, rocky or alluvial plains along river Tawi. It is an active diurnal lizard, and was found to be quite active even during noon hours of the months of May and June when the temperature rises as high as 40°C. Though commonly seen, its speed, crepuscular nature and small size makes it a difficult species for collection. Specimens were collected from April to November, although some were seen during winter months also basking on stones. A Juvenile with a 17 mm snout vent length, was collected in the month of July.

The present collection of *O. jerdoni* showed presence of 8 to 12 femoral pores on each side. Smith (1935) described 7 to 12 femorals, rarely 6 pores on each side. Minton's (1966) collection of *O. jerdoni* from Pakistan showed

8 to 9 in males and 6 to 7 femoral pores in females. The series of collection from J & K state showed no such sexual dimorphism in the number of femoral pores. However, in males femoral pores of each side was separated by one *inter femoral scale* (scale without femoral gland) and 4-5 such inter-femoral scales in females.

***Acanthodactylus cantoris cantoris* Gunther**
Indian Fringe-Toed Sand Lizard

Acanthodactylus cantoris cantoris Gunther (1864). Rept. Brit India, p. 73.

Material examined: (1) sex undetermined; Akhnoor, Tehsil, in Jammu, July, 1977.

This is first record of the species from state of Jammu and Kashmir. The species has been earlier recorded from Ambala, Ferozpur and Hissar, all of which lie to the south of J & K state. It seems to be a rare species in this part of the country. A single specimen was collected under stones in the plain area of tehsil Akhnoor. From the site of its collection the lizard appears to be an inhabitant of dry, rocky, alluvial bed.

The specimen collected agrees with *A. cantoris cantoris* described from Pakistan (Minton 1966) and from India (Smith 1935) except for the presence of a small occipital shield and a large triangular shield of uncertain nature lying wedged between frontonasal and prefrontal. The species exists as a single subspecies *A. cantoris cantoris* throughout its range in the Indian limit but west of longitude 60°, it may exist in other subspecific forms, like *A. cantoris blanfordi*, *A. cantoris schmidtii* and *A. cantoris arabicus*. Of these subspecies, *A. cantoris schmidtii* and *A. cantoris arabicus* have their range limited from Arabia to western border of Iran and therefore, cannot in any case be related to one available in the state.

The only other subspecies, *A. cantoris blanfordi* (Minton 1966) is distributed over the area that lies to the north and west of the range of the typical form. However, in the presence of well differentiated dorsal and lateral scale and higher count of femoral pores (31), the present form can be well differentiated from *A. cantoris blanfordi*.

***Phrynocephalus theobaldi* Blyth**
Kashmir Toad Agama

Phrynocephalus theobaldi Blyth (1863). J. Asiat. Soc. Bengal xxxii, p. 90.

Material examined: (14), 7 males, 5 females and 2 juveniles. Leh and Kargil districts in Kashmir Province, June, 1976 and May, 1977.

The specimens were collected on the slopes of hills on the road side of Kashmir-Ladakh National Highway. The tract is almost devoid of any plant cover. A very active lizard, which when cornered assumes a threatening posture by raising its body off the ground and opening its mouth widely. It lives in burrows which are sometimes 15 cm to 25 cm deep. A montane species; specimens were collected from 3,000 m to 3,500 m in Leh and Kargil. The lizard feeds on high altitude beetles, ants and grasshoppers. The other species which have been seen in association with this lizard are *P. reticulatus*, *Cyrtodactylus stoliczkai*, *C. lawderanus*, *Agama himalayana* and *Scincella ladacense*.

A female collected on May, 1977 died in captivity in August of the same year. On dissecting it, 3 nearly full term embryos were recovered, suggestive of its ovo-viviparous habit.

In Indian limit, it has been recorded only from Kashmir and elsewhere from southern Tibet and East Turkestan. Prakash (1971) stated "The genus *Phrynocephalus* is being reported for the first time from India." He

seems to have ignored the reports of *P. theobaldi* and *P. reticulatus* in Kashmir province by Smith (1935).

Phrynocephalus reticulatus Eichwald
Ladakh Toad Agama

Phrynocephalus reticulatus Eichwald (1831).
Zool. spec., p. 183.

Material examined: (2) 1 male and 1 female; June, 1976, Leh.

Habits similar to that of *P. theobaldi* but

an uncommon species. About *P. reticulatus*, Smith (1935, p. 232) recorded, "The species is included in the fauna of the Indian Empire on the strength of a single specimen in the British Museum collected by Schlagintweit brothers and said to have come from Ladakh, Kashmir. Unfortunately the localities given by these collectors cannot be relied on." The collection of 2 specimens of *P. reticulatus* from Ladakh confirms its occurrence within Indian limits.

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22. ON FLYING LIZARD IN MUNDANTHURAI SANCTUARY

Flying lizards *Draco dussumieri* are fairly common in Mundanthurai along the ribbon of forests, fringing rivers Thambaraparani and Servalar. In walks along the riverside footpaths, Ficus Prop-Kanikudi Nature Trail, Rauf Ali's Bonnet Macaque study area, Glyn Davies, 'Squirrel study area and around Kodamadi Rest House region, they can be seen, if one waits and watches for them. The bright yellow dewlap projecting and disappearing helps to locate this lizard though the folded wings are difficult to see. It is easier to watch them in the plantation of Teak, Neem

and Bombax just adjoining the river Servalar, when they descend down to convenient eye-level. They are found along the border plantation lines 2-5 rows of planted area parrallel to the river. On seeing one gliding in circles and landing on a planted tree 1m above ground, then running up to a height of 5-6 m then gliding down. I searched the area and located another lizard moving on the ground. One possible guess was that the lizard on the ground was a female, who had come to the ground for laying eggs.

The teak poles were about 6 m tall almost